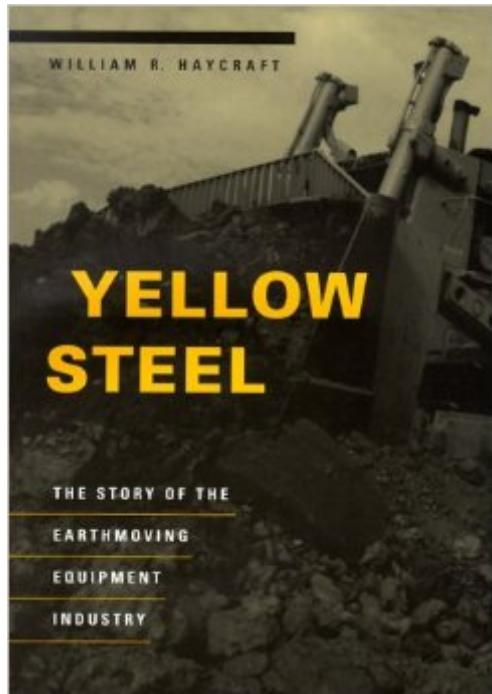


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Yellow Steel: The Story Of The Earthmoving Equipment Industry



Synopsis

In "Yellow Steel", the first overarching history of the earthmoving equipment industry, William Haycraft examines the tremendous increase in the scope of mining and construction projects, from the Suez Canal through the interstate highway system, made possible by innovations in earthmoving machinery. Led by Cyrus McCormick's invention in 1831 of a practical mechanical reaper, many of the builders of today's massive earthmoving machines began as makers of reapers, plows, threshers, and combines. Haycraft traces the efforts of manufacturers such as Caterpillar, Allis-Chalmers, International Harvester, J. I. Case, Deere, and Massey-Ferguson to diversify from farm equipment to specialized earthmoving equipment and the important contributions of LeTourneau, Euclid, and others in meeting the needs of the construction and mining industries. He shows how postwar economic and political events, especially the creation of the interstate highway system, spurred the development of more powerful and more agile machines. He also relates the precipitous fall of several major American earthmoving machine companies and the rise of Japanese competitors in the early 1980s. Extensively illustrated and packed with detailed information on both manufacturers and machines, "Yellow Steel" knits together the diverse stories of the many companies that created the earthmoving equipment industry - how they began, expanded, retooled, merged, succeeded, and sometimes failed. Their history, a step-by-step linking of need and invention, provides the foundation for virtually all modern transportation, construction, commerce, and industry.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Mention the words "yellow steel" to just about anyone and the image that most comes to mind is that of Caterpillar, whether bulldozer, excavator, or grader. And just about every child has been awed by the size and ability of these large machines; witness the huge amount of toy bulldozers, excavators, dump trucks, etc. But it has been this childlike awe that has prevented a serious look at the earthmoving industry and, especially, its history. When I look at a documentary or a book on the Ford Mustang, for instance, I will see the history, the roots, and the legend of the car, as well as several past year models which led to the present model. Now, if I watch a documentary or read a book on earthmoving equipment, all I see are the biggest trucks, shovels and tractors. Books are listed with title adjectives like "Giant" "Huge" "Colossal," and the like. It's as if no one really wants to take this industry seriously. The irony, of course, is that if it weren't for the earthmoving industry, there would be no interstate highway system, Hoover and Grand Coulee Dams, housing projects, sewer systems, or flood control. Perhaps a case could also be made that the environment would also be in better shape, but I rather doubt it. William R. Haycraft, a former employee for Caterpillar Tractor, has written the first comprehensive history of this fascinating business. He covers the history of the earthmoving industry and the forces, economic and social, that contributed to the development of mechanized earthmoving equipment. The intelligence of the book reveals itself in its detailed coverage of the development of various types of machinery and the companies that manufactured them.

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